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BURR & BROWN
PO BOX 7068
SYRACUSE, NY 13261-7068

EXAMINER	
MYERS, JESSICA L	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/534,599	JOHNSON ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	JESSICA L. MYERS	3746	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *11/2/2007*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1,2 and 4-44* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) *3* is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1,2,and 4-44* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☒ The drawing(s) filed on *11 May 2005* is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☒ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☒ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date *11/2/07, 5/11/05*.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the "fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit" must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Objections

In Reference to Claim 39

Claim 39 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claim 1. When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

In Reference to Claim 40

Claim 40 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claim 6. When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

In Reference to Claim 41

Claim 41 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claim 1. When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

In Reference to Claim 43

Claim 43 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claim 35. When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in

content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

In Reference to Claim 44

Claim 44 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claim 36. When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

In Reference to Claim 12

Claim 13 recites the limitations "said intake shield" in line 2 and “said filter access” in line 3. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 39, 40, and 41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 3,695,781 to LaBarber (LaBarber).

In Reference to Claim 1

LaBarber teaches a fluid provider assembly, comprising:

a fluid provider housing (housing (13)) having an intake end (lower end of housing (13)) for receiving fluid into said housing and an opposed output end (outlet (11a)) for expelling fluid out of said housing, said output end being substantially coaxial with said input end (see figure 2, where axis would run down the midline of the apparatus);

an intake faceplate (rim member (15)) having a fluid intake vent (lower screen member (29)) portion to allow fluid to be received into said housing;

a plurality of members extending from said intake faceplate in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto (leg members (30), which extend from rim member (15) which is attached to the lower screen member (29)), said members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said intake vent portion when said housing is oriented such that said intake end is positioned proximate a supporting surface on which the assembly is located (see column 4, lines 19-29);

a motor unit positioned within said housing (electrical motor (14)); and

a fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit for pressurizing fluid within said housing (fluid pressurization unit is included with the motor (14), see column 2 lines 1-6) such that fluid expelled from said output end has a higher pressure than fluid received through said intake end (increased pressure is necessary for the movement of the air).

In Reference to Claim 2

LaBarber teaches the assembly of claim 1 (see the rejection of claim 1 above), further comprising an intake shield positioned within said housing, said intake shield being spaced a distance from said intake end and interposed between said intake end and said fluid pressurization unit (upper screen member (28), see figure 5).

In Reference to Claim 4

LaBarber teaches the assembly of claim 1 (see the rejection of claim 1 above), wherein said intake faceplate is removable said intake faceplate having a contact surface configured to be detachably connected to said intake end (intake faceplate (15) is removable from the housing (13) since bolts (31) and nuts (32) can be disassembled).

In Reference to Claim 6

LaBarber teaches a fluid provider, comprising:

a fluid provider housing (housing (13)) having an intake end (lower end of housing (13)) for receiving fluid into said housing and an opposed output end (outlet (11a)) for expelling fluid out of said housing;

a power supply connection member positioned on said output end (cord (16));

a fluid conduit coupler member positioned on said output end (flexible tube (11b) which is attached to outlet (11a));

an operational control switch positioned on said output end (toggle switch (18));

a motor unit positioned within said housing (electrical motor (14)); and

a fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit for pressurizing fluid within said housing (fluid pressurization unit is included with the motor (14), see column 2 lines 1-6) such that fluid expelled from said output end has a higher pressure than fluid received through said intake end (increased pressure is necessary for the movement of the air).

In Reference to Claim 8

LaBarber teaches the fluid provider of claim 6 (see the rejection of claim 6 above), said fluid conduit coupler member further comprising a contact surface for providing a locking relationship with an end of a fluid conduit (see figure 1 where conduit (11b) is locked onto outlet (11a)).

In Reference to Claim 10

LaBarber teaches a fluid provider, comprising:

a fluid provider housing (housing (13)) having an intake end (lower end of housing (13)) for receiving fluid into said housing and an opposed output end (outlet (11a)) for expelling fluid out of said housing;

a fluid intake vent portion (lower screen member (29)) positioned on said intake end (rim member (15)) to allow fluid to be received into said housing;

a plurality of leg members extending from said intake end in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto (leg members (30), which extend from rim member (15) which is attached to the lower screen member (29)), said leg members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said fluid intake vent portion when said housing is oriented such that said intake end is positioned proximate a supporting surface on which said fluid provider is located (see column 4, lines 19-29);

a motor unit positioned within said housing (electrical motor (14)); and

a fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit for pressurizing fluid within said housing (fluid pressurization unit is included with the motor (14), see column 2 lines 1-6) such that fluid expelled from said output end has a higher pressure than fluid received through said intake end (increased pressure is necessary for the movement of the air).

In Reference to Claim 11

LaBarber teaches the fluid provider of claim 10 (see the rejection of claim 10 above), further comprising an intake shield positioned within said housing, said intake shield being spaced a distance from said intake end and interposed between said intake end and said fluid pressurization unit (upper screen member (28), see figure 5).

In Reference to Claim 12

LaBarber teaches the fluid provider of claim 11 (see the rejection of claim 11 above), said intake end further comprising an access door. The intake end housing (13)

is detachable from rim member (15) by nuts (32) and bolts (31), which allows access to the filter and motor assemblies.

In Reference to Claim 13

LaBarber teaches the fluid provider of claim 12 (see the rejection of claim 12 above), further comprising a fluid filter (filter member (27)) interposed between said intake end (rim member (15)) and said intake shield (upper screen member (28)) in a position corresponding to at least a portion of said filter access end (see figure 5).

In Reference to Claim 39

LaBarber teaches a fluid provider assembly, comprising:

a fluid provider housing (housing (13)) having an intake end (lower end of housing (13)) for receiving fluid into said housing and an opposed output end (outlet (11a)) for expelling fluid out of said housing, said output end being substantially coaxial with said input end (see figure 2, where axis would run down the midline of the apparatus);

an intake faceplate (rim member (15)) having a fluid intake vent (lower screen member (29)) portion to allow fluid to be received into said housing;

a plurality of members extending from said intake faceplate in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto (leg members (30), which extend from rim member (15) which is attached to the lower screen member (29)), said members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said intake vent portion when said housing is oriented such that said intake end is positioned

proximate a supporting surface on which the assembly is located (see column 4, lines 19-29);

a motor unit positioned within said housing (electrical motor (14)); and

a fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit for pressurizing fluid within said housing (fluid pressurization unit is included with the motor (14), see column 2 lines 1-6) such that fluid expelled from said output end has a higher pressure than fluid received through said intake end (increased pressure is necessary for the movement of the air).

In Reference to Claim 40

LaBarber teaches a fluid provider, comprising:

a fluid provider housing (housing (13)) having an intake end (lower end of housing (13)) for receiving fluid into said housing and an opposed output end (outlet (11a)) for expelling fluid out of said housing;

a power supply connection member positioned on said output end (cord (16));

a fluid conduit coupler member positioned on said output end (flexible tube (11b) which is attached to outlet (11a));

an operational control switch positioned on said output end (toggle switch (18));

a motor unit positioned within said housing (electrical motor (14)); and

a fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit for pressurizing fluid within said housing (fluid pressurization unit is included with the motor (14), see column 2 lines 1-6) such that fluid expelled from said output end has a

higher pressure than fluid received through said intake end (increased pressure is necessary for the movement of the air).

In Reference to Claim 41

LaBarber teaches a fluid provider assembly, comprising:

a fluid provider housing (housing (13)) having an intake end (lower end of housing (13)) for receiving fluid into said housing and an opposed output end (outlet (11a)) for expelling fluid out of said housing

a fluid intake vent portion (lower screen member (29)) positioned on said intake end (rim member (15)) +to allow fluid to be received into said housing;

a plurality of members extending from said intake faceplate in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto (leg members (30), which extend from rim member (15) which is attached to the lower screen member (29)), said members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said intake vent portion when said housing is oriented such that said intake end is positioned proximate a supporting surface on which the assembly is located (see column 4, lines 19-29);

a motor unit positioned within said housing (electrical motor (14)); and

a fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit for pressurizing fluid within said housing (fluid pressurization unit is included with the motor (14), see column 2 lines 1-6) such that fluid expelled from said output end has a higher pressure than fluid received through said intake end (increased pressure is necessary for the movement of the air).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LaBarber as applied to claim 4 above in view of U.S. Patent 5,944,494 to Soltani et al. (Soltani et al.).

LaBarber teaches the assembly of claim 4 (see the rejection of claim 4 above), including an intake faceplate (15) that is detachable from the intake end of the housing (13), but does not teach the use of a coupling plate to couple to units together.

Soltani teaches modular, stackable blowing units (see figures 13 and 14) which are detachably coupled so that any number of pumps can be stacked. The units each have a mating pump base with an extending male foot portion (252) and top with a female recessed portion (262) (see columns 7-8 lines 64-28). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to form the detachable intake faceplates of LaBarber in the manner taught by Soltani et al., with male and female mating surfaces, so that the units would be stackable. Since the tops and bottoms of the apparatuses of LaBarber also serve as the units' inlets and outlets,

coupling them together would also serve to couple the intake end of one unit to the output end of the previous unit.

6. Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LaBarber as applied to claim 4 above in view of U.S. Patent 4,363,944 to Poirier (Poirier).

LaBarber teaches the fluid provider of claim 6 (see the rejection of claim 6 above), but does not teach that the control switch has a cover to prevent unintentional engaging or disengaging of the pump apparatus.

Poirier teaches a switch cover that prevents the unintentional actuation of a light switch, see figures 1 and 3. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include the switch cover (10) of Poirier on the apparatus of LaBarber in order to prevent the accidental actuation of the pump apparatus.

7. Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LaBarber as applied to claim 6 in view of U.S. Patent 4,678,014 to Owen et al. (Owen et al.).

LaBarber teaches the fluid provider of claim 6 (see the rejection of claim 6 above), but does not teach that the output side of the housing has an output shield.

Owen et al. teach a similar inflator apparatus with a housing (26) with a detachable nozzle (44). Located in between the housing (26) and the nozzle (44) is an outlet plate (38), see figure 2. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include the outlet plate of Owen et al. on the apparatus of

LaBarber in order to prevent debris from entering the apparatus when the device is turned off.

8. Claims 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 33, and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LaBarber in view of U.S. Patent 3,478,958 to Hinck et al. (Hinck et al.).

In Reference to Claim 14

LaBarber teaches a fluid provider assembly, comprising:

a fluid provider housing (housing (13)) having an intake end (lower end of housing (13)) having a fluid input vent (lower screen member (29)) for receiving fluid into said housing and an opposed output end (outlet (11a)) having a fluid output vent (outlet 11a) for expelling fluid out of said housing,

a motor unit positioned within said housing (electrical motor (14));

a fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit for pressurizing fluid within said housing (fluid pressurization unit is included with the motor (14), see column 2 lines 1-6) such that fluid expelled from said output end has a higher pressure than fluid received through said intake end (increased pressure is necessary for the movement of the air).

LaBarber does not teach that the fluid provider is encased in a portable sound damping case.

Hinck et al. teach a muffling housing for portable machines that includes:

a portable sound damping case (housing, generally indicated at 10, and more specifically the shell (60)), said case having a base side (base (11)), peripheral sidewalls (sidewalls (12, 13) and end walls (14, 15)), and a closeable top side (exhaust opening (63), see figure 5), said base side having a fluid intake vent located at a first position laterally spaced a distance from a center point of said base side (inlets (29 and 30) located on end wall (14) which is spaced laterally from the center of the base side);

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to place the fluid providing apparatus of LaBarber inside the housing disclosed by Hinck et al. to muffle the noise made by the fluid provider and to allow the system to be portable via the wheels (8) disclosed by Hinck et al. Doing so would result in the intake end of said fluid provider assembly being positioned proximate said base side of said case such that said fluid intake vent of said fluid provider assembly is located in a second position laterally offset from said first position.

In Reference to Claim 15

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 14 (see the rejection of claim 14 above), wherein said intake end (lower end of housing (13)) of said fluid provider housing further comprises an intake faceplate (rim member (15)) having a fluid intake vent (lower screen member (29)) portion to allow fluid to be received into said housing;

In Reference to Claim 16

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teach the portable fluid provider system of claim 15 (see the rejection of claim 15 above), said intake faceplate further comprising a

plurality of members extending from said intake faceplate in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto (leg members (30), which extend from rim member (15) which is attached to the lower screen member (29)), said members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said intake vent portion when said housing is oriented such that said intake end is positioned proximate a supporting surface on which the assembly is located (see column 4, lines 19-29);

In Reference to Claim 17

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 15 (see the rejection of claim 15 above), wherein said intake faceplate is removable said intake faceplate having a contact surface configured to be detachably connected to said intake end (intake faceplate (15) is removable from the housing (13) since bolts (31) and nuts (32) can be disassembled).

In Reference to Claim 18

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 14 (see the rejection of claim 14 above), said output end further comprising a power supply connection member positioned on said output end (cord (16)), a fluid conduit coupler member positioned on said output end (flexible tube (11b) which is attached to outlet (11a)), an operational control switch positioned on said output end (toggle switch (18));

In Reference to Claim 21

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 15 (see the rejection of claim 15 above), said intake faceplate further comprising

an access door substantially centrally positioned thereon. The intake end housing of LaBarber (13) is detachable from rim member (15) by nuts (32) and bolts (31), which allows access to the filter and motor assemblies.

In Reference to Claim 22

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 21 (see the rejection of claim 21 above), further comprising a fluid filter (filter member (27)) interposed between said intake end (rim member (15)) and said fluid pressurization unit (electrical motor (11)) in a position corresponding to at least a portion of said access door (as seen in figure 5, the filter (27) covers the axis door when the base (15) is connected to the housing (13)).

In Reference to Claim 23

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 18 (see the rejection of claim 18 above), further comprising a detachable fluid conduit (flexible tube (11b)). It has been held that a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus satisfying the claimed structural limitations therefore, the limitation "for conveying a pressurized fluid from said fluid provider to a port of a fluid receptacle adapted to mate with said fluid conduit coupler mechanism of said output end" has not been given patentable weight.

In Reference to Claim 25

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 14 (see the rejection of claim 14 above), said peripheral sidewalls of said case

further comprising a front sidewall, an opposed back sidewall, a first lateral sidewall and an opposed second lateral sidewall (the sidewalls (12, 13) and end walls (14, 15) of Hinck et al.).

In Reference to Claim 28

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 14 (see the rejection of claim 14 above), said case further comprising a plurality of leg members extending from an outer surface of said base side in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto (leg members (30), which extend from rim member (15) which is attached to the lower screen member (29)), said leg members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said fluid intake vent of Said case when said base side of said case is positioned proximate a surface on which said case is resting (see column 4, lines 19-29).

In Reference to Claim 33

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 25 (see the rejection of claim 25 above), further comprising at least one vent (inlets 29 and 30 are located on sidewall (14)) positioned on at least one of said first and said second lateral sidewalls.

In Reference to Claim 42

LaBarber teaches a fluid provider assembly, comprising:

a fluid provider housing (housing (13)) having an intake end (lower end of housing (13)) for receiving fluid into said housing and an opposed output end (outlet (11a)) for expelling fluid out of said housing, said output end being substantially coaxial

with said input end (see figure 2, where axis would run down the midline of the apparatus);

a motor unit positioned within said housing (electrical motor (14)); and

a fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit for pressurizing fluid within said housing (fluid pressurization unit is included with the motor (14), see column 2 lines 1-6) such that fluid expelled from said output end has a higher pressure than fluid received through said intake end (increased pressure is necessary for the movement of the air); and

LaBarber does not teach that the fluid provider is encased in a portable sound damping case.

Hinck et al. teach a muffling housing for portable machines that includes:

a portable sound damping case (housing, generally indicated at 10, and more specifically the shell (60)), said case having a base side (base (11)), peripheral sidewalls (sidewalls (12, 13) and end walls (14, 15)), and a closeable top side (exhaust opening (63), see figure 5), said base side having a fluid intake vent located at a first position laterally spaced a distance from a center point of said base side (inlets (29 and 30) located on end wall (14) which is spaced laterally from the center of the base side);

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to place the fluid providing apparatus of LaBarber inside the housing disclosed by Hinck et al. to muffle the noise made by the fluid provider and to allow the system to be portable via the wheels (8) disclosed by Hinck et al. Doing so would result in the intake end of said fluid provider assembly being positioned proximate said base side of

said case such that said fluid intake vent of said fluid provider assembly is located in a second position laterally offset from said first position.

9. Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. as applied to claim 18 above, and further in view of Poirier.

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 18 (see the rejection of claim 18 above), but does not teach that the control switch has a cover to prevent unintentional engaging or disengaging of the pump apparatus.

Poirier teaches a switch cover that prevents the unintentional actuation of a light switch, see figures 1 and 3. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include the switch cover (10) of Poirier on the apparatus of LaBarber in order to prevent the accidental actuation of the pump apparatus.

10. Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of Soltani et al.

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 17 (see the rejection of claim 17 above), including an intake faceplate (15) that is detachable from the intake end of the housing (13), but does not teach the use of a coupling plate to couple to units together.

Soltani teaches modular, stackable blowing units (see figures 13 and 14) which are detachably coupled so that any number of pumps can be stacked. The units each have a mating pump base with an extending male foot portion (252) and top with a female recessed portion (262) (see columns 7-8 lines 64-28). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to form the detachable intake faceplates of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. in the manner taught by Soltani et al., with male and female mating surfaces, so that the units would be stackable. Since the tops and bottoms of the apparatuses of LaBarber also serve as the units' inlets and outlets, coupling them together would also serve to couple the intake end of one unit to the output end of the previous unit.

11. Claim 24 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. as applied to claim 18 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent 3,563,676 to Coovert et al. (Coovert et al.).

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 18 (see the rejection of claim 18 above), but does not teach that the power cord is detachable.

Coovert et al. teach a similar fluid providing apparatus that has a socket (48) for attaching the plug of a power supply lead (50). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include the plug and power supply lead of Coovert et al. in the apparatus of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. so that the unit could be easily connected and disconnected from a traditional power source without the

12. Claims 26 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. as applied to claim 25 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,788,032 to Krulik (Krulik).

In Reference to Claim 26

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 25 (see the rejection of claim 25 above), but does not teach that muffling housing has a pocket formed on its back sidewall.

Krulik teaches a container (10) that has a back pocket (30) which is attached to the container (10) via stitching (31) on its lateral edges, and via zipper (35) on its bottom edge. The pocket has an opening along its upper edge for storing articles (see figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include the back pocket of Krulik on the apparatus of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. so that additional articles can be transported with the housing. Because the housing of Hinck et al. has side doors (50), some slight modifications may be needed to ensure that the pocket does not interfere with the operation of the housing, but these modifications would be well within the skill of one familiar with the art.

In Reference to Claim 27

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. and Krulik teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 26 (see the rejection of claim 256 above), further comprising an auxiliary pad positioned in said pocket (see figure 1, where a pad of newspaper is stored in the pocket).

13. Claims 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 43, and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. as applied to claims 14 and 25 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,762,170 to Shyr et al. (Shyr et al.).

In Reference to Claim 29

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 14 (see the rejection of claim 14 above), said case further comprising a closeable flap member (hinged cover (64)) positioned on a portion of said top side of said case in a location sufficient to provide direct access to said output end of said fluid provider positioned within said case (when the apparatus of LaBarber is placed inside the case of Hinck et al., the hinged cover (64) of Hinck et al. will provide access to the output end (11a) of the fluid provider of LaBarber). LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. does not teach that the flap member provides access to the fluid provider when the top side is closed.

Shyr et al. teach a container (2) that has a top flap (16) with an oblong hole (80) in its face (see figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include a hole as taught by Shyr et al. in the apparatus of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. so that a flexible conduit could be attached to the fluid provider even when the hinged cover is closed.

In Reference to Claim 30

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 25 (see the rejection of claim 25 above), but does not teach that the housing has straps extending from an inner surface of its base.

Shyr et al. teach a container (2) that has a plurality of straps (44, see figure 5) for securing a device inside the container. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include the straps of Shyr et al. in the apparatus of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. in order to secure the fluid provider of LaBarber safely into the container of Hinck et al. Furthermore, Shyr et al. teach that the straps can be secured on any one of the side walls, back wall, front wall, or base of the container (see figure 5), thus it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that the straps could be positioned in any number of ways and still provide the same result.

In Reference to Claim 31

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. and Shyr et al. teach the portable fluid provider system of claim 30 (see the rejection of claim 30 above), said case further comprising at least one securing strap extending from an inner surface of at least one of said first and said second lateral sidewalls (see figure 5 of Shyr et al.).

In Reference to Claim 32

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. and Shyr et al. teach the portable fluid provider system of claim 30 (see the rejection of claim 30 above), said case further comprising a plurality of securing straps extending from an inner surface of said back sidewall of said case (see figure 5 of Shyr et al.).

In Reference to Claim 34

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. and Shyr et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 29 (see the rejection of claim 29 above), said flap member further comprising a vent to facilitate fluid exchange between said case and the atmosphere surrounding said case to prevent overheating of said fluid provider assembly positioned within said case. The hole in the hinged cover of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. and as taught by Shyr et al. would also serve as a vent to the interior of the case.

In Reference to Claim 35

LaBarber teaches a fluid provider assembly, comprising:

a fluid provider housing (housing (13)) having an intake end (lower end of housing (13)) having a fluid input vent (lower screen member (29)) for receiving fluid into said housing and an opposed output end (outlet (11a)) having a fluid output vent (outlet 11a) for expelling fluid out of said housing, a plurality of members extending from said intake faceplate in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto (leg members (30), which extend from rim member (15) which is attached to the lower screen member (29)), said members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said intake vent portion when said housing is oriented such that said intake end is positioned proximate a supporting surface on which the assembly is located (see column 4, lines 19-29), a power supply connection member positioned on said output end (cord (16)), a fluid conduit coupler member positioned on said output

end (flexible tube (11b) which is attached to outlet (11a)), an operational control switch positioned on said output end (toggle switch (18)),

a motor unit positioned within said housing (electrical motor (14));

a fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit for pressurizing fluid within said housing (fluid pressurization unit is included with the motor (14), see column 2 lines 1-6) such that fluid expelled from said output end has a higher pressure than fluid received through said intake end (increased pressure is necessary for the movement of the air).

LaBarber does not teach that the fluid provider is encased in a portable sound damping case.

Hinck et al. teach a muffling housing for portable machines that includes:

a portable sound damping case (housing, generally indicated at 10, and more specifically the shell (60)), said case having a base side (base (11)), peripheral sidewalls (sidewalls (12, 13) and end walls (14, 15)), and a closeable top side (exhaust opening (63), see figure 5), said base side having a fluid intake vent located at a first position laterally spaced a distance from a center point of said base side (inlets (29 and 30) located on end wall (14) which is spaced laterally from the center of the base side); a plurality of leg members (wheels (8)) extending from an outer surface of said base side in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto, said leg members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said fluid intake vent of said case when said base side of said case is proximate a surface on which said case is

resting (see figure 1). Additionally, Hinck et al. teach a case further comprising a closeable flap member (hinged cover (64)) positioned on a portion of said top side of said case in a location sufficient to provide direct access to said output end of said fluid provider positioned within said case (when the apparatus of LaBarber is placed inside the case of Hinck et al., the hinged cover (64) of Hinck et al. will provide access to the output end (11a) of the fluid provider of LaBarber).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to place the fluid providing apparatus of LaBarber inside the housing disclosed by Hinck et al. to muffle the noise made by the fluid provider and to allow the system to be portable via the wheels (8) disclosed by Hinck et al. Doing so would result in the intake end of said fluid provider assembly being positioned proximate said base side of said case such that said fluid intake vent of said fluid provider assembly is located in a second position laterally offset from said first position.

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. does not teach that the flap member provides access to the fluid provider when the top side is closed, or that there are a plurality of securing straps extending from the inner surface of the housing as disclosed by Hinck et al.

Shyr et al. teach

a container (2) that has a top flap (16) with an oblong hole (80) in its face (see figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the

time of invention to include a hole as taught by Shyr et al. in the apparatus of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. so that a flexible conduit could be attached to the fluid provider even when the hinged cover is closed.

Additionally, Shyr et al. teach

a container (2) that has a plurality of straps (44, see figure 5) for securing a device inside the container. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include the straps of Shyr et al. in the apparatus of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. in order to secure the fluid provider of LaBarber safely into the container of Hinck et al. Furthermore, Shyr et al. teach that the straps can be secured on any one of the side walls, back wall, front wall, or base of the container (see figure 5), thus it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that the straps could be positioned in any number of ways and still provide the same result.

In Reference to Claim 36

LaBarber teaches a fluid provider assembly, comprising:

a fluid provider housing (housing (13)) having an intake end (lower end of housing (13)) for receiving fluid into said housing, said intake end having a contact surface (base of 11, which contacts rim member (15))

an intake faceplate (rim member (15)) having a contact surface configured to mated with said contact surface of said intake end,

an output end (outlet (11a)) opposing said intake and having a fluid output vent (11a) for expelling fluid out of said housing, said output end comprising a

power supply connection member positioned on said output end (cord (16)), a fluid conduit coupler member positioned on said output end (flexible tube (11b) which is attached to outlet (11a)), an operational control switch positioned on said output end (toggle switch (18)),

said intake faceplate further comprising, a plurality of members extending from said intake faceplate in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto (leg members (30), which extend from rim member (15) which is attached to the lower screen member (29)), said members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said intake vent portion when said housing is oriented such that said intake end is positioned proximate a supporting surface on which the assembly is located (see column 4, lines 19-29),

a motor unit positioned within said housing (electrical motor (14));

a fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit for pressurizing fluid within said housing (fluid pressurization unit is included with the motor (14), see column 2 lines 1-6) such that fluid expelled from said output end has a higher pressure than fluid received through said intake end (increased pressure is necessary for the movement of the air).

LaBarber does not teach that the fluid provider is encased in a portable sound damping case.

Hinck et al. teach a muffling housing for portable machines that includes:

a portable sound damping case (housing, generally indicated at 10, and more specifically the shell (60)), said case having a base side (base (11)),

peripheral sidewalls (sidewalls (12, 13) and end walls (14, 15)), and a closeable top side (exhaust opening (63), see figure 5), said base side having a fluid intake vent located at a first position laterally spaced a distance from a center point of said base side (inlets (29 and 30) located on end wall (14) which is spaced laterally from the center of the base side); a plurality of leg members (wheels (8)) extending from an outer surface of said base side in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto, said leg members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said fluid intake vent of said case when said base side of said case is proximate a surface on which said case is resting (see figure 1). Additionally, Hinck et al. teach a case further comprising a closeable flap member (hinged cover (64)) positioned on a portion of said top side of said case in a location sufficient to provide direct access to said output end of said fluid provider positioned within said case (when the apparatus of LaBarber is placed inside the case of Hinck et al., the hinged cover (64) of Hinck et al. will provide access to the output end (11a) of the fluid provider of LaBarber).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to place the fluid providing apparatus of LaBarber inside the housing disclosed by Hinck et al. to muffle the noise made by the fluid provider and to allow the system to be portable via the wheels (8) disclosed by Hinck et al. Doing so would result in the intake end of said fluid provider assembly being positioned proximate said base side of said case such that said fluid intake vent

of said fluid provider assembly is located in a second position laterally offset from said first position.

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. does not teach that the flap member provides access to the fluid provider when the top side is closed, or that there are a plurality of securing straps extending from the inner surface of the housing as disclosed by Hinck et al.

Shyr et al. teach

a container (2) that has a top flap (16) with an oblong hole (80) in its face (see figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include a hole as taught by Shyr et al. in the apparatus of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. so that a flexible conduit could be attached to the fluid provider even when the hinged cover is closed.

Additionally, Shyr et al. teach

a container (2) that has a plurality of straps (44, see figure 5) for securing a device inside the container. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include the straps of Shyr et al. in the apparatus of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. in order to secure the fluid provider of LaBarber safely into the container of Hinck et al. Furthermore, Shyr et al. teach that the straps can be secured on any one of the side walls, back wall, front wall, or base of the container (see figure 5), thus it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that the straps could be positioned in any number of ways and still provide the same result.

In Reference to Claim 37

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. and Shyr et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 36 (see the rejection of claim 36 above), wherein said contact surface of said intake faceplate is configured to be detachably connected to said intake end such that said intake faceplate is removable (intake faceplate (15) is removable from the housing (13) since bolts (31) and nuts (32) can be disassembled)..

In Reference to Claim 43

LaBarber teaches a fluid provider assembly, comprising:

a fluid provider housing (housing (13)) having an intake end (lower end of housing (13)) having a fluid input vent (lower screen member (29)) for receiving fluid into said housing and an opposed output end (outlet (11a)) having a fluid output vent (outlet 11a) for expelling fluid out of said housing, a plurality of members extending from said intake faceplate in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto (leg members (30), which extend from rim member (15) which is attached to the lower screen member (29)), said members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said intake vent portion when said housing is oriented such that said intake end is positioned proximate a supporting surface on which the assembly is located (see column 4, lines 19-29), a power supply connection member positioned on said output end (cord (16)), a fluid conduit coupler member positioned on said output end (flexible tube (11b) which is attached to outlet (11a)), an operational control switch positioned on said output end (toggle switch (18)),

a motor unit positioned within said housing (electrical motor (14));

a fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit for pressurizing fluid within said housing (fluid pressurization unit is included with the motor (14), see column 2 lines 1-6) such that fluid expelled from said output end has a higher pressure than fluid received through said intake end (increased pressure is necessary for the movement of the air).

LaBarber does not teach that the fluid provider is encased in a portable sound damping case.

Hinck et al. teach a muffling housing for portable machines that includes:

a portable sound damping case (housing, generally indicated at 10, and more specifically the shell (60)), said case having a base side (base (11)), peripheral sidewalls (sidewalls (12, 13) and end walls (14, 15)), and a closeable top side (exhaust opening (63), see figure 5), said base side having a fluid intake vent located at a first position laterally spaced a distance from a center point of said base side (inlets (29 and 30) located on end wall (14) which is spaced laterally from the center of the base side); a plurality of leg members (wheels (8)) extending from an outer surface of said base side in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto, said leg members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said fluid intake vent of said case when said base side of said case is proximate a surface on which said case is resting (see figure 1). Additionally, Hinck et al. teach a case further comprising a closeable flap member (hinged cover (64)) positioned on a portion of said top

side of said case in a location sufficient to provide direct access to said output end of said fluid provider positioned within said case (when the apparatus of LaBarber is placed inside the case of Hinck et al., the hinged cover (64) of Hinck et al. will provide access to the output end (11a) of the fluid provider of LaBarber).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to place the fluid providing apparatus of LaBarber inside the housing disclosed by Hinck et al. to muffle the noise made by the fluid provider and to allow the system to be portable via the wheels (8) disclosed by Hinck et al. Doing so would result in the intake end of said fluid provider assembly being positioned proximate said base side of said case such that said fluid intake vent of said fluid provider assembly is located in a second position laterally offset from said first position.

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. does not teach that the flap member provides access to the fluid provider when the top side is closed, or that there are a plurality of securing straps extending from the inner surface of the housing as disclosed by Hinck et al.

Shyr et al. teach

a container (2) that has a top flap (16) with an oblong hole (80) in its face (see figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include a hole as taught by Shyr et al. in the apparatus of

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. so that a flexible conduit could be attached to the fluid provider even when the hinged cover is closed.

Additionally, Shyr et al. teach

a container (2) that has a plurality of straps (44, see figure 5) for securing a device inside the container. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include the straps of Shyr et al. in the apparatus of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. in order to secure the fluid provider of LaBarber safely into the container of Hinck et al. Furthermore, Shyr et al. teach that the straps can be secured on any one of the side walls, back wall, front wall, or base of the container (see figure 5), thus it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that the straps could be positioned in any number of ways and still provide the same result.

In Reference to Claim 44

LaBarber teaches a fluid provider assembly, comprising:

a fluid provider housing (housing (13)) having an intake end (lower end of housing (13)) for receiving fluid into said housing, said intake end having a contact surface (base of 11, which contacts rim member (15))

an intake faceplate (rim member (15)) having a contact surface configured to mated with said contact surface of said intake end,

an output end (outlet (11a)) opposing said intake and having a fluid output vent (11a) for expelling fluid out of said housing, said output end comprising a power supply connection member positioned on said output end (cord (16)), a

fluid conduit coupler member positioned on said output end (flexible tube (11b) which is attached to outlet (11a)), an operational control switch positioned on said output end (toggle switch (18)),

said intake faceplate further comprising, a plurality of members extending from said intake faceplate in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto (leg members (30), which extend from rim member (15) which is attached to the lower screen member (29)), said members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said intake vent portion when said housing is oriented such that said intake end is positioned proximate a supporting surface on which the assembly is located (see column 4, lines 19-29),

a motor unit positioned within said housing (electrical motor (14));

a fluid pressurization unit interposed between said intake end and said motor unit for pressurizing fluid within said housing (fluid pressurization unit is included with the motor (14), see column 2 lines 1-6) such that fluid expelled from said output end has a higher pressure than fluid received through said intake end (increased pressure is necessary for the movement of the air).

LaBarber does not teach that the fluid provider is encased in a portable sound damping case.

Hinck et al. teach a muffling housing for portable machines that includes:

a portable sound damping case (housing, generally indicated at 10, and more specifically the shell (60)), said case having a base side (base (11)), peripheral sidewalls (sidewalls (12, 13) and end walls (14, 15)), and a closeable

top side (exhaust opening (63), see figure 5), said base side having a fluid intake vent located at a first position laterally spaced a distance from a center point of said base side (inlets (29 and 30) located on end wall (14) which is spaced laterally from the center of the base side); a plurality of leg members (wheels (8)) extending from an outer surface of said base side in a direction substantially perpendicular thereto, said leg members having a sufficient dimension to enable substantially uninhibited fluid flow access to said fluid intake vent of said case when said base side of said case is proximate a surface on which said case is resting (see figure 1). Additionally, Hinck et al. teach a case further comprising a closeable flap member (hinged cover (64)) positioned on a portion of said top side of said case in a location sufficient to provide direct access to said output end of said fluid provider positioned within said case (when the apparatus of LaBarber is placed inside the case of Hinck et al., the hinged cover (64) of Hinck et al. will provide access to the output end (11a) of the fluid provider of LaBarber).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to place the fluid providing apparatus of LaBarber inside the housing disclosed by Hinck et al. to muffle the noise made by the fluid provider and to allow the system to be portable via the wheels (8) disclosed by Hinck et al. Doing so would result in the intake end of said fluid provider assembly being positioned proximate said base side of said case such that said fluid intake vent

of said fluid provider assembly is located in a second position laterally offset from said first position.

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. does not teach that the flap member provides access to the fluid provider when the top side is closed, or that there are a plurality of securing straps extending from the inner surface of the housing as disclosed by Hinck et al.

Shyr et al. teach

a container (2) that has a top flap (16) with an oblong hole (80) in its face (see figure 1). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include a hole as taught by Shyr et al. in the apparatus of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. so that a flexible conduit could be attached to the fluid provider even when the hinged cover is closed.

Additionally, Shyr et al. teach

a container (2) that has a plurality of straps (44, see figure 5) for securing a device inside the container. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include the straps of Shyr et al. in the apparatus of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. in order to secure the fluid provider of LaBarber safely into the container of Hinck et al. Furthermore, Shyr et al. teach that the straps can be secured on any one of the side walls, back wall, front wall, or base of the container (see figure 5), thus it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that the straps could be positioned in any number of ways and still provide the same result.

14. Claim 38 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. and Shyr et al. as applied to claim 37 above, and further in view of Soltani et al.

LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. and Shyr et al. teaches the portable fluid provider system of claim 37 (see the rejection of claim 37 above), including an intake faceplate (15) that is detachable from the intake end of the housing (13), but does not teach the use of a coupling plate to couple to units together.

Soltani teaches modular, stackable blowing units (see figures 13 and 14) which are detachably coupled so that any number of pumps can be stacked. The units each have a mating pump base with an extending male foot portion (252) and top with a female recessed portion (262) (see columns 7-8 lines 64-28). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to form the detachable intake faceplates of LaBarber as modified by Hinck et al. and Shyr et al. in the manner taught by Soltani et al., with male and female mating surfaces, so that the units would be stackable. Since the tops and bottoms of the apparatuses of LaBarber also serve as the units' inlets and outlets, coupling them together would also serve to couple the intake end of one unit to the output end of the previous unit.

Conclusion

15. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. U.S. Patent 5,433,175 to Hughes et al. teaches a blower apparatus housing where the inlet vent is on the base of the housing.

16. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JESSICA L. MYERS whose telephone number is (571)270-5059. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5:30pm EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Devon Kramer can be reached on 571-272-7118. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

17. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Charles G Freay/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3746

/JLM/